

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000568

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD
(CWHITTLESEY,PAGNEW)
ABU DHABI FOR HWECHSEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KDEM](#) [KWMN](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND NETWORKS IN AMERICA AND
OMAN

SUMMARY

1. The Omani participants in the 2004 MEPI-funded "Business Internship Program (BIP) for Young Middle Eastern Women" were guests of honor at a recent dinner celebrating International Women's Day. Three of the four BIP participants shared the highlights of the program with the other guests, including 20 Omani businesswomen. The participants spoke enthusiastically about the leadership training that they received and their experiences as interns with American companies. End summary.

Growing Professionally

2. Mrs. Baltimore hosted a dinner to commemorate International Women's Day (IWD) for the four Omani participants in the 2004 Business Internship Program for Young Middle Eastern Women and 20 other Omani businesswomen. Razan Darwish, a BIP participant who interned at Disney World stated, "The most interesting part of the internship was working with the company, seeing it behind the scenes, and learning about how it grew to be so stable, innovative, and imaginative." Upon her return to the Ministry of Tourism, where she is a Tourism Marketing Officer, Ms. Darwish conducted workshops for colleagues, drawing upon what she learned from her internship in the Product and Services, Planning and Development Department at Disney World. Describing weekly outings with the director of her department she commented, "They taught me a lot about how to be an effective leader and helped me to meet people who gave me ideas about how to develop Oman's tourism sector."

People Working Together

3. Rahab al-Lawati, an intern with Nike, described her experience in this way, "It was better than I could have hoped for. People wanted me to learn, and allowed me to choose the departments that I would intern in." Rahab divided her time between the Corporate Responsibility, Diversity, and Europe, Middle East and Africa departments. She focused her remarks on the personal insights that she gained from the experience, describing the sense of accomplishment she felt from succeeding in a professional setting in a country far away from home. Rahab also stated that she was impressed to see the degree to which people from different backgrounds and races were able to work together effectively at Nike.

WONDER WOMEN UNITE!

4. Ms. Darwish remarked that she appreciated the opportunity to network with the 40 other program participants. "We are in almost daily contact to discuss our career objectives and to mentor and support one another. A local newspaper that published an article on the program entitled it 'Wonder Women.' There couldn't be a more appropriate title for the women involved in the BIP program." Ms. Darwish said she is eager to organize a BIP Alumni meeting in Oman.

5. Fatma al-Maskery, who interned with Microsoft, spoke with enthusiasm about the women's networks that exist within the company. During her internship, she participated in a Women's Leadership conference and was impressed by how women at the conference created action plans to address issues of concern to them. In addition, Ms. al-Maskery credited the program with helping her to hone her presentation skills, build her confidence, and increase her effectiveness.

6. Mayan al-Asfoor, commenting on her experience at Whirlpool's Government Relations Office in Washington, D.C., was struck by the company's use of conference calls to

conduct meetings and the use of work from home programs that reduce the need for in-person meetings and commuting times. Ms. al-Asfoor commented, "These work-from-home programs are amazing, because they help women to be more efficient in their work and private lives by allowing them to stay at home."

CUISINE AND CONNECTIONS

17. The guests, who ranged from senior, award-winning businesswomen to young entrepreneurs with home-based companies, were impressed by the quality of the BIP program and the opportunities for professional growth that it provided to the participants. Guests shared their questions and comments on the BIP participants' experiences, and then moved to dinner, where lively conversations and networking ensued. One guest commented, "It was a perfect evening. I learned about this great program, and thank the Embassy for providing the opportunity to network with other businesswomen."

BALTIMORE